

RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT



11-23 MOUNTED UNIT OPERATING MANUAL

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Chief of Police or Designee

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OBJECTIVES

Members of the Richmond Police Department Mounted Unit will take a proactive approach in providing the citizens of Richmond, members of the Richmond Police Department and others with specialized Horse Mounted Police Officers. The Mounted Unit, with highly trained Horse Mounted Teams, will reduce crime and make the neighborhoods of the City of Richmond safer places to reside. This objective will be accomplished through the use of highly visible and eminently approachable, community oriented, Horse Mounted Police Teams. They will provide education and community relation opportunities for the children of the area by providing stable tours and school visits. The Mounted Unit will provide crowd control at large events and during any civil unrest to reduce the element of danger for citizens and other members of the Police Department. The Mounted Unit will represent the City of Richmond and the Richmond Police Department at public functions and ceremonies in an unrivaled fashion and will be “ambassadors” for the City and the Police Department.

GOALS

The Richmond Police Mounted Unit will provide all services requested. We will continually train and school to improve our skills and those of our animals. We will conduct training with other agencies to increase our pool of available well-trained Horse Mounted Teams in times of need. Mounted teams will meet with Community Leaders and Organizations to improve the Mounted Unit’s efforts in Community Policing.

PURPOSE

Horse Mounted Police Officers must deal with a wide range of problems that test their patience, knowledge and abilities. Mounted Officers are expected to present themselves and their mounts in a positive and irreproachable manner. Every Mounted Officer will receive guidance and assistance from the Department and from the procedures contained herein that have been established for the unit.

This manual provides a reference source for the Mounted Officer. It is intended to aid the coordination of interdepartmental activity and provide a basis for uniformity. This manual is designed to offer guidance from the Department and the Mounted Unit in the required operational functions.

MOUNTED SQUAD PERSONNEL

SELECTION OF THE MOUNTED OFFICER

1. Mounted officers will be selected from sworn police personnel within the Richmond Police Department who have completed their probationary period.
2. Officers desiring a transfer to the Mounted Unit must submit a Request for Transfer.

3. Candidates should possess good work habits, be resourceful and be dependable. Due to the nature of the job and the relationship between man and mount a high degree of patience is necessary.
4. The Mounted Unit is a small, close-knit unit. Officers desiring transfer to this unit must possess good inter-personal relationship skills.
5. Candidates for the unit should be free of any allergies, back problems or any other physical infirmities that would prevent them from functioning as a Mounted Officer.
6. If possible, the Mounted Unit Sergeant will arrange for prospective candidates to spend time with the unit to evaluate their ability to function as a Mounted Police Officer. This may include grooming a horse, riding a horse or any other routine function required of a Mounted Officer.
7. The Officer-In-Charge of Special Events Division Tactical Units, Mounted Sergeant, Training Officer and another member of the unit, designated by the Officer-In-Charge of Special Events Division Tactical Units, will interview all prospective candidates and will make recommendations. The final recommendations will be sent through the proper channels.
8. The interview will be for the purpose of explaining the requirements of the Mounted Squad and determining the suitability of the candidate.
9. Once a candidate is selected for the position and transferred to the unit, they will be placed on a one (1) year probation period. During this period, new officer's skills in riding and equine management will be evaluated. Officers must display a positive attitude, the ability to handle and ride a horse, and a desire to work and excel as a Mounted Police Officer. If, during this probationary period or at any future time, any officer fails to adhere to the Mounted Unit's training requirements, the Mounted Unit Sergeant may in writing recommend the officer for reassignment.

MOUNTED TRAINING OFFICER

1. The Training Officer of the Mounted Unit is a voluntary position. This position involves no extra benefits or special considerations. The Mounted Officer selected for this job must have a deep dedication to the Unit and a desire to see that the Unit is the best that it can be.
2. Selection for the position of Training Officer for the Unit will be made by the Officer-in-Charge of the Special Events Division Tactical Units and Mounted Sergeant.
3. The officer selected should possess knowledge of training both horses and riders.
4. The ability to assist in the selection process of prospective new horses is a must.

5. The Training Officer for the Mounted Unit must successfully complete a Mounted Training Officers course and be certified by the National Mounted Training Group or another mounted certification organization as deemed appropriate by the Mounted Unit Sergeant.

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

1. Civilian employees will be hired through normal City of Richmond hiring procedures.
2. Civilians designated as Stablemen will work under the direction of the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
3. Responsibilities of Stablemen shall include, but not be limited to, general cleaning and tidiness of the barn, mucking stalls and feeding the horses.
4. If a stableman is a Certified Farrier, he/she will, in addition to the other jobs required of the Stableman, be responsible for shoeing all horses.

HORSES

SELECTION OF THE HORSE

1. Horses for use by the Mounted Unit may be obtained by either donation or purchase from private owners or dealers.
2. Before being accepted by the unit, each horse will be evaluated by the Training Officer and the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
3. The following guidelines will be used in the selection of horses:
 - It must be a gelding.
 - It must be between 5 and 15 years old.
 - It must be at least 15.2 hands tall, measured with a stick.
 - No specific breed is required.
 - Dark colors (bay, sorrel, chestnut, brown, black, etc.) with as little white as possible. Color alone should not remove an otherwise acceptable horse from consideration.
 - It must be sound. The police farrier and veterinarian will check them.
 - It must demonstrate three (3) suitable gates (walk, trot and canter). It is preferable for the owner to ride the horse first so we can observe how the animal moves.
 - It must be trailerable. Must load and haul.
 - It must be working on the street, functional, within 45 “training” days.
 - It must have a history of healthiness. No colic, chronic lameness, negative coggins.
 - It is agreed that the appearance of the horse will not be drastically altered until he proves to be an acceptable mount for the Mounted Unit.

4. All horses purchased by the Mounted Unit will come with a 45 training day agreement. No moneys will transfer until this time period is up or the Training Officer and the Mounted Unit Sergeant make a final decision on the horse.
5. Equine donation forms must be completed on each horse donated to the Richmond Police Department Mounted Squad. The donor must indicate what to do with the horse if it is found to be not acceptable into the unit.
6. The Mounted Unit will accept responsibility for any injuries to the horse or damage caused by the horse during the training period.

DISPOSAL OF HORSES

1. Horses found to be not suitable for the Mounted Unit will be returned to the donor. If the person who donated the animal desires, the Mounted Unit will attempt to find a new home for the horse.
2. Police horses that have been determined to be no longer fit for service and are eligible for retirement will first be offered to their riders. If the rider does not want the horse, a suitable home will be found for the animal.
3. Any person who adopts a retired police horse will sign a form releasing the City of Richmond, the Richmond Police Mounted Squad and any and all members of the Mounted Unit from any liability resulting from the Horse.
4. Any person who adopts a retired police horse shall affirm that the horse will be well cared for and not used or sold for any purpose not fitting his status as a "Retired Member of the Richmond Police Mounted Unit".
5. It should be understood that most retired police horses have some infirmity in addition to their advanced age, which can make them hard to place. They have little value but deserve to have a place to live out the rest of their lives.

ASSIGNMENT OF MOUNTS

1. Horses will be assigned to their riders by the Mounted Unit Sergeant and the Training Officer of the Mounted Unit.
2. Although any officer in the unit should be able to ride any horse in the unit, officers should not take a horse that is not assigned to them without approval of the Mounted Unit Sergeant or the Training Officer of the unit.
3. If the situation should arise that an officer needs to use another mount (not his/her assigned mount) and is unable to contact either the Mounted Unit Sergeant or the Training Officer,

he/she should use his/her own best judgment and report this incident to the Mounted Unit Sergeant or the Training Officer as soon as possible.

4. Any officer having specific problems with his/her assigned mount should bring this to the attention of the Training Officer so solutions can be found or adjustments made.

GENERAL MOUNTED SQUAD GUIDELINES

MOUNTED SQUAD ASSIGNMENTS

1. Mounted teams will be assigned by the Mounted Unit Sergeant, to specific areas within the various Police Precincts, and will be responsible for patrolling that area. Officers should report to the dispatcher on the appropriate radio channel that he/she is working that area and advise when he/she leaves. Officers should remain in constant radio contact and attempt to help the assigned beat units in any way possible.
2. Officers are responsible for moving any fecal matter that their mount may deposit on any sidewalk, crosswalk or private property. Any residue left in the streets will be removed during general street cleaning activities.
3. If a truck and trailer are used to transport to a patrol area, the officer should take care to park the vehicle in a place that will be safe for loading and unloading the animals. He/She should not park in a place that monopolizes prime parking areas used by citizens and should try to clean up the area as well as possible before leaving.
4. If an assignment will be occurring after dark, the officer will have his/her horse attired with reflective gear.
5. If, during an assignment, an officer needs to leave his/her mount unattended it is his/her responsibility to secure the animal in a place and manner in which the animal cannot be injured or cause any injury to innocent civilians or damage to property. It is preferable to leave the animal either in a horse trailer or tied in one of the standing stalls supplied by various parking decks.
6. When the situation arises that an officer needs to dismount to enter a building and there is no place to secure his/her mount, the officer should attempt to get another mounted officer to hold his/her horse. If another mounted officer is not available, he/she should attempt to find another police officer to do so. As a last resort, the officer may ask a citizen to hold the horse. It should be noted that many citizens are not familiar with horses and great care should be taken in this situation.
7. At the beginning of their shift, officers should groom and tack their mounts and dress themselves as expeditiously as possible so as to minimize down time.

8. At the end of their tour, officers should not return to the stables any sooner than necessary to complete any required maintenance before their shift ends.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1. The Training Officer shall be responsible for keeping records of all training activities that the Mounted Unit attends.
2. Any training opportunities that members of the unit attend that are not supervised by the Training Officer should be reported to him/her so that proper record can be made of them.
3. When new horses are brought into the unit for basic training, the Training Officer shall keep a daily training record for the animal to follow his progress.
4. Each of the unit's mounts shall have records kept on them showing shots, worming and other significant events.

HORSE TRAINING MANAGEMENT

1. The responsibility of training horses and riders is that of the Training Officer of the Mounted Squad and is accomplished through the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
2. Upon completion of basic training, all mounted teams will be required to attend mandatory monthly re-training. If at all possible, every effort should be made to eliminate any conflicts that may keep the team from attending retraining.
3. Monthly in-service re-training is very important and must be maintained in order to keep the horses and riders at their maximum proficiency. This training is critical for the unit in our desire to be on the leading edge of horse mounted policing.
4. During the monthly in-service training, each mounted team will be evaluated to determine their proficiency and progress toward our ultimate goal. If any team has specific problems this is the time to address them. If, during this training, the Training Officer determines that a team's performance is less than satisfactory, he/she will report this determination to the Mounted Unit Sergeant who will then arrange remedial training for them.

HORSE CARE AND MAINTENANCE

1. The horses will be housed in a clean environment. Stalls will be "picked" on a daily basis. Automatic waterers will be checked daily and cleaned as needed by the Stableman.
2. The horses will be fed twice daily on as close a schedule as varying shifts will allow. The Stableman will feed in the morning at a time early enough to allow the animals to finish

eating before time to go to work. The evening feeding will be done by an on duty officer at a time determined by the Mounted Unit Sergeant.

3. Any special feeding instructions or supplements to be added to the food will be noted on the dry wipe board outside of the stall.
4. Individual officers are responsible for the cleaning and grooming of their assigned mount. The animals will be groomed before each work shift and clipped on a regular basis.
5. No horse should be bathed outside when the temperature is below 65 degrees. If bathing is necessary and the temperature is too low, the officer should make arrangements with the Mounted Unit Sergeant for it to be done in the heated barn.
6. All unit horses will have their hooves shod or trimmed on a regular basis. This function will be performed by the unit's farrier or another farrier approved by the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
7. Horses assigned to work on the street on a regular basis should be shod with shoes containing borium spots welded on them.
8. At no time should a horse work the street shod in plain steel shoes. They offer very little resistance to slipping and pose a safety problem for both officer and mount.
9. In the event of inclement weather, the decision of whether or not the horses will be deployed will be made by the Mounted Unit Sergeant. If the horses are kept in the stable, the officers will work their assignments using available police vehicles or on foot.
10. No one, other than Mounted Unit personnel, shall be allowed to handle, groom or ride a department horse without express permission of the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
11. In the event a horse is injured or killed, the rider will notify the Mounted Unit Sergeant immediately. If the veterinarian is obviously needed, he/she shall be summoned first.
 - a. If the rider is injured and cannot take control of the situation, the nearest member of the unit should respond and assume responsibility of the animal. The Mounted Unit Sergeant and Training Officer should be notified.
12. At no time will a horse be destroyed without the express approval of the Mounted Unit Sergeant or the Watch Commander on duty at the time of the incident.
 - a. A veterinarian should be summoned to help make the appropriate decision. If euthanasia is required, the vet should perform it.
 - b. If the situation requires the officer to carry out the euthanasia, it should be performed in a manner consistent with unit training.

13. If a horse dies unexpectedly or as the result of injuries, an autopsy will be performed if it is deemed appropriate by the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
14. Every horse will be vet checked four times per year. The vet will worm each horse during this visit and administer any shots or vaccinations that may be necessary. Each animal will have a Coggins test for Equine Infectious Anemia annually. This test must prove to be negative. A positive result from the Coggins test shall cause the horse to be destroyed.
15. When the Mounted Unit is out-of-town the horses shall enjoy the same treatment that they receive at home. It is the responsibility of the rider to insure that the horse has clean, fresh water, food and bedding. The rider should inspect strange stalls for anything that could possibly injure his/her horse. He/She should, also, make sure that there is no way for the animal to escape from his stall. Riders should be reminded that their usually calm and well-mannered horse might act differently in a strange environment and take all proper precautions to prevent injury to his/her horse, him/her, innocent citizens and other horses.
16. It should be noted that the needs of the horse come before the needs of the Officer. He will be unloaded from the trailer, untacked, fed, and watered before the officer stows his/her gear or any personal items. While on the street the officer will insure the horse is watered and not put in any unnecessary danger.

MOUNTED UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

1. The Mounted Unit uniform is the class A type uniform.
2. When riding the horse, this uniform will consist of riding breeches, black field boots and riding helmet. This helmet will be worn at all times when riding the horse unless otherwise determined by the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
3. When not riding, the officer has the option of wearing straight leg pants and normal uniform footwear.
4. While on special assignments, the uniform of the day will be determined by orders for the specific assignment or by the Mounted Unit Sergeant.

HORSE MOUNTED EQUIPMENT

1. Each rider may be issued the following equipment.
 - a. 1- set rain gear
 - b. 2- pair riding boots
 - c. 1- winter riding helmet

- d. 1- pair spurs
- e. 1- saddle with housing and pads
- f. 1- bridle
- g. 1- grooming bucket with tools

CARE OF ISSUED MOUNTED EQUIPMENT

Each mounted officer shall be responsible for the care and upkeep of their own and their assigned horse's equipment.

1. All leather equipment will be kept clean and in good usable condition.
2. Boots and helmets will be kept cleaned and polished.
3. All metal equipment should be kept shined and rust-free.
4. When any equipment becomes questionable, it should be brought to the attention of the Mounted Unit Sergeant or the Training Officer. It will be repaired or replaced accordingly.
5. All issued equipment will be returned upon anyone leaving the unit.
6. Any equipment lost or damaged through negligence of the rider may be, on the decision of the Mounted Unit Sergeant, replaced at the rider's personal expense.
7. Riders are reminded not to leave equipment in a position where the horse can destroy it (i.e., helmets hanging on saddles where the horse can rub them against something, tying their mount using the noseband of their bridle, trailering their horse in only a bridle, or leaving things like ropes and sticks attached to their saddles while trailering.) These indiscretions could cause, at the opinion of the Mounted Unit Sergeant; replacement of destroyed equipment at the rider's expense.

MOUNTED SQUAD VEHICLES

1. All vehicles should be kept clean and in good working order. They will follow the guidelines for required scheduled vehicle maintenance as set by Department guidelines.
2. Drivers are responsible for removing all trash from the vehicle at the end of their tour of duty.
3. Vehicles should be gassed up by the driver at the end of their tour of duty.
4. Trailers should be inspected daily for any objects that could injure the horses or cause damage to tack.
5. Trailer floors, hitches, suspension and tires should be inspected routinely by the Training Officer and the Mounted Unit Sergeant

6. Lights and other electrical connections should be checked before leaving the barn with a trailer.
7. Any defects found with the vehicles should be reported to the Mounted Unit Sergeant and if necessary the vehicles taken to the garage.
8. If an officer has any doubt about the safety of a truck and trailer, **DO NOT** use the vehicle until it has been checked out.

TRAILERING OF HORSES

1. The driver of the truck and trailer rig is responsible for inspecting the hitch connection, wiring connection and other connections between the tow vehicle and the trailer that are subject to human error and oversight.
2. Before loading horses into any trailer, the trailer should be inspected inside for any object that could cause injury to the horse or his tack.
3. If the animal is saddled before loading, the rider should remove any items that are hanging on the saddle that could be damaged or cause discomfort to the animal during transport. Things like sticks, tie ropes and flashlights should always be removed.
4. When a horse is loaded into a trailer, the butt bar or chain, partition or whatever device is in use to prevent the animal from backing out, should be secured before tying the horse's head to the trailer.
5. Horses should not be tied in the trailer using their bridle. If a horse is hauled in his bridle, his halter should be placed over the bridle and the halter attached to the trailer.
6. All officers will be instructed in proper truck and trailer driving tactics before being allowed to drive a rig. Final approval will come from the Mounted Unit Sergeant.
7. Drivers of truck and trailer rigs should be reminded that speed is their enemy. Horses, due to their height, have a high center of gravity. This causes them to sway from side to side while riding in the trailer. All turns, stops and accelerations, should be performed in a cautious and gentle fashion so as to reduce the discomfort of the animal caused by swaying and bouncing in the trailer. Too many bad rides in a trailer will likely cause the horse to refuse to load into the trailer and necessitate re-training and confidence building.
8. Horses should always be backed out of a trailer. Walking them out and letting them jump down from the trailer is not acceptable, as it is more stressful on the animal's legs and more likely to cause injury to the horse.

USES OF THE MOUNTED SQUAD

BEAT PATROL

1. Mounted teams will be utilized in patrolling assigned beat areas in the City.
2. Mounted units are the foundation of community policing. They present a friendly, approachable attitude and are readily accepted into even the worst neighborhoods in the City. They function as “ambassadors” for the City.
3. Due to their height in the saddle, mounted officers are highly visible which, in itself, is a deterrent to crime.
4. Mobility is a large factor in horse mounted police work. The ability to get through and around traffic, into alleys and paths and over and around obstacles that would cause problems for other police vehicles, proves mounted police officers to be an asset to the Department.
5. The fact that mounted units are normally used to supplement normal patrols in an area, makes the unit available to concentrate on problem areas and enforce laws pertaining to the quality of life of the residents there.

CROWD CONTROL

1. Horse Mounted Police Officers are the ultimate in crowd control, whether the crowd is violent or non-violent.
2. Mounted officers stand tall in a crowd and are perfect for observing or issuing directions to the crowd.
3. One horse can do the work of 10 to 12 foot officers in a crowd situation. This will prevent many confrontations between police and citizens and presents a less intimidating police presence to the crowd.
4. All of our mounts are equipped with riot gear. If the units are to be deployed in a crowd situation that is expected to go bad, this equipment will be available, on site, to be utilized.
5. When moving crowds, horses should be used in tactical formations and may lead or follow foot officers depending on the aggressiveness/situation of the crowd, or authorized by the mounted Sergeant/Supervisor or on Site Supervisor.
6. Horse teams should be deployed in groups of at least two. Horses are herd animals and behave better in stressful situations when they are not alone.
7. Mounted units shall not be deployed into crowds unless authorized by the Mounted Unit Sergeant or the Site Supervisor at the scene.

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS AND CEREMONIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Mounted units may be used for many different special events. These may include, but are not limited to: school and daycare visits, parades, inaugurations, funerals, ground breaking, and dignitary escorts.
2. Mounted Police Officers present at special events present a positive and impressive image of the Department and the City of Richmond.
3. Officers are reminded that they are in the spotlight in events like these and should present themselves and their mounts accordingly.
4. All requests for mounted officers at special events should be directed to the Mounted Unit Sergeant.

TRAINING

NEW HORSES

1. All new prospective mounts for the Mounted Unit will be trained by the Training Officer. If the situation arises that the Training Officer is unable to start a new horse (injuries or sickness, 2 new horses at the same time), The Training Officer and the Mounted Unit Sergeant will designate another officer to do the training.
2. New horses come with a “45 training day” evaluation period.
3. The Training Officer shall keep a daily log including what training was attempted that day, how the horse responded and his/her personal feelings about the capabilities of the animal.
4. The animal will be started in a ring and ridden at a walk, trot and canter. This affords the trainer time to become accustom to the horse’s gaits and controllability.
5. The horse will be tested with various obstacles and stimuli that he might encounter in his new work environment.
 - a. Smoke
 - b. Gunfire
 - c. Horns
 - d. Sirens
 - e. Music
 - f. Vehicles
 - g. Trash
 - h. Supercans
 - i. Grates
 - j. Machinery
 - k. Jumps

6. At the discretion of the trainer, the animal will be introduced to the street with a more experienced horse in a less congested area.
7. The animal must prove to be gentle and even-tempered and must not show any vicious habits such as kicking or biting.
8. At the end of the allotted training period, the final determination on the animal will be made by the Mounted Unit Sergeant and the Training Officer.

NEW RIDERS

1. Training of new riders on the Mounted Unit is the responsibility of the Training Officer.
2. If there are too many new students to be taught by the Training Officer alone, he/she will, along with the Mounted Unit Sergeant designate a senior officer to assist.
3. Basic training for new riders will last approximately seven weeks.
4. Basic mounted training will consist of, but not be limited to, the following subjects:
 - a. Basic Equitation
 - b. Horse Psychology
 - c. Horse Anatomy
 - d. Health Management and First Aid
 - e. Stable Management
 - f. Equipment
 - g. Horse Grooming and Tack Preparation
 - h. Horse Trailering
 - i. Administration
 - j. Basic Formations for Troop Movement
 - k. Tactical and Crowd Control Formations
 - l. Sensory and Obstacle Course Training
 - m. Patrol Techniques and Arrest Procedures
 - n. Inspectional Process
 - o. Press, Public and Community Relations
 - p. Cultural Diversity
5. If at any time during this basic training, the Training Officer and the Mounted Unit Sergeant that an officer is not able to learn to ride and function as a Mounted Police Officer, the trainee may be recommended for re-assignment.
6. It should be noted that, successful completion of the basic horse mounted training class does not mean that an officer will be an expert equestrian. We can turn out competent mounted officers but, advancement of abilities comes only through time, practice, experience and desire to excel by the individual officer.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

1. The Mounted Unit will conduct in-service training at least 1 day per month.
2. All mounted officers shall attend this training and all absences will be documented by Mounted Unit Sergeant and/or Training Officer. Every effort should be made to schedule court and days off around these days.
3. This training consists of :
 - a. Advanced Equitation
 - b. Formations
 - c. Crowd Control
 - d. Sensory and Obstacle Course Training
4. During this training the Training Officer will help individual officers with any problems they may be having.
5. The Training Officer will keep a record of all training performed by individual officers.
6. In the event that an officer is required to take over another horse, he/she may request in-service training time with the new horse and the Training Officer. This training time will be subject to the approval of the Mounted Unit Sergeant.